Welcome to…

Committees That Work

Common Traps

Creative Solutions

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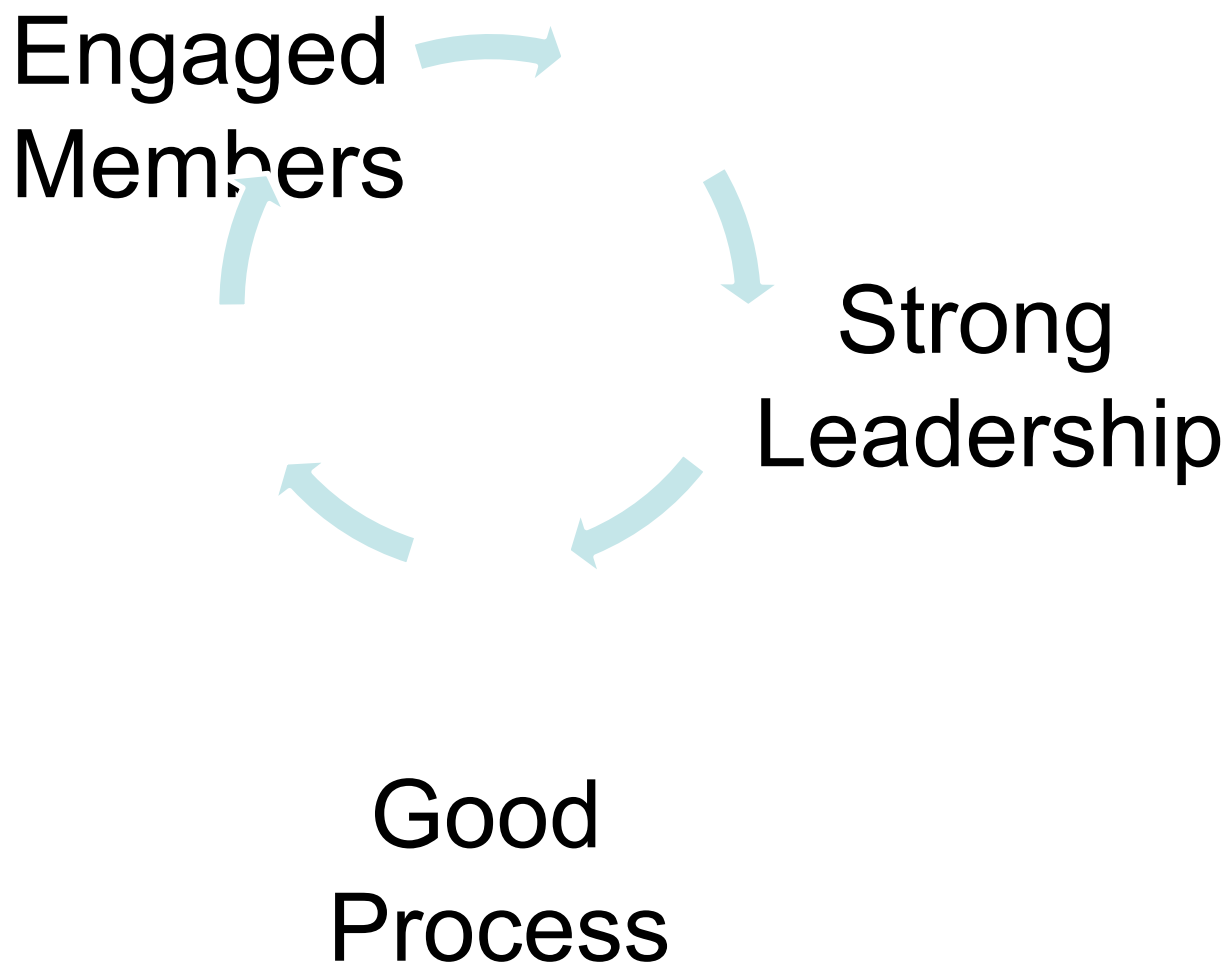
Effective Committee Model



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Workshop Objectives

You will learn:

- **Group processes** for productive committees
- Strategies for **effective leadership** and management
- Roles and responsibilities of **engaged committee members**

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Meeting Nightmares of Your Past

1. Can you think of a time when someone on a committee showed favoritism to family, friends, or neighbors?

2. Have you ever listened to the discussion in a meeting and wondered "what are we trying to accomplish here?"

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Meeting Nightmares of Your Past

5. Have you ever experienced having a decision that you thought had been made is back on the table at the next meeting?

6. Have you ever dreaded going to a meeting because you knew that things would "erupt" into conflict at some point?

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Meeting Nightmares of Your Past

3. Have you ever felt that you're starting to see some of your committee members more than you've been seeing your own family?

4. Have you ever been at a meeting where even though there was an agenda, no one bothered to pay attention to it?

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Meeting Nightmares of Your Past

7. Have you ever discovered that over an hour has gone by and you're still on the first agenda item – "Reports"?

8. Add up all the yes responses you have.

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How Did You Score?

4-7 = This workshop is just what you need!

1-3 = This workshop will assist you in moving those committees from good to great.

0 = You really aren't a member of any committees, are you?

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Agenda

Seven Common Traps of Committees

Trap 1: Letting Private Interests Influence Public Decision Making

Trap 2: Lacking Direction and Purpose

Trap 3: Filling Seats with the Usual Suspects

Trap 4: Making Decisions Outside of the Meeting

Trap 5: Getting Stuck in Conflict

Trap 6: Boring Business as Usual

Trap 7: Losing Control of the Group

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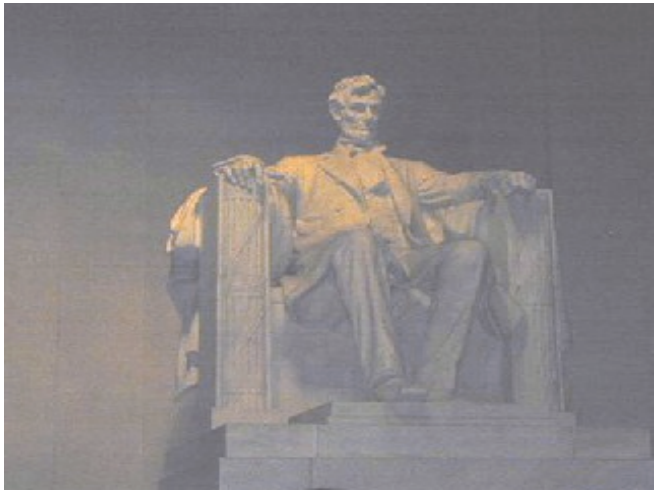
Trap 1 –Letting Private Interests Influence Public Decisions

Solutions:

- ✓Stay in the Realm of Public Decision Making
- ✓Establish Working Agreements



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Stay in the Realm of Public Decision Making

	Private	*Public*
Setting	Home, circle of friends	School, workplace, associations, meetings
Goal	Belonging	Problem Solving
Characteristics	Alike Closed Closeness Loyalty	Diverse Open Recognition Accountability
Decision-making	Opinion One Person Spontaneous	Deliberative Judgment Collaborative Strategic
Outcomes	Self-esteem Unconditional Love	Problems Solved Public Creation

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Establish Working Agreements or Ground Rules…

- Generate with the group for buy-in
- Get member agreement
- Determine how to enforce and consequences
- Regular scheduled review
- *See examples in booklet*

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Trap 2 – Lacking Direction and Purpose

Solutions:

- ✓ Focus on Purpose and Results
- ✓ Set Shared Vision and Goals
- ✓ Inform New Committee Members

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Activity: Shared Vision

Working in small groups (without talking), use the pieces in your bag to create a complete picture.

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Activity: Shared Vision

The Tree Activity

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Focus on Purpose and Results

The Right Purpose:

- Why, what, how, where and when?

The Right Results:

- Advisory Power
- Decision Making Authority
- Task Completion

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Set a Shared Vision and Goals

A shared vision helps groups build shared meaning and express a collective sense of what is important to the group and why.

"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes time. Vision with action can change the world."

Joel Barker

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Inform New Committee Members

It is important for committees to inform and "ground" new members as to the purpose and work of the group.

How have you been "oriented" to a committee that you have joined?

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Trap 3 – Filling Seats with the Usual Suspects

Solutions:

- ✓ Recruit Members with Diverse Perspectives
- ✓ Seek Representation from Multiple Sectors
- ✓ Use the Right Approach to Recruit Members

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Recruit Members With Diverse Perspectives

Activity: How Diverse is Your Committee?

Reflect on the membership of the committees that you serve on and answer the questions on the bottom of p.13.

Share in your small groups.

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Seek Representation from Multiple Sectors

- Diversity is more than racial and gender diversity.
- It is important to involve people from different sectors of the community.
- Go beyond the "usual suspects" to consider other stakeholders.

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Use the Right Approach for Recruiting

- Use a positive approach
- Be personal
- State why a particular person is needed
- Be specific
- State time demands

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Consider These Approaches…

Do!

Example A:

Our committee needs your skills and experience in public relations to help us…

Don't

Example B:

I was thinking that since your wife left you, that you might have some time…

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Consider These Approaches…

Don't

Example C:

I've got to find a person to fill a vacancy on a committee. It doesn't take much time…and you can serve as long as you want - 10 to 20 years.

Do!

Example D:

We are considering a list of 10 people to serve a one year term on a committee and you are our first choice because of your…

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Trap 4 - Making Decisions Outside of the Meeting

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Trap 4 – Making Decisions Outside of the Meeting

Solutions:

- ✓ Recognize Typical Group Decision-making Tensions
- ✓ Decide How to Decide
- ✓ Set Up Information and
- ✓ Communication Systems

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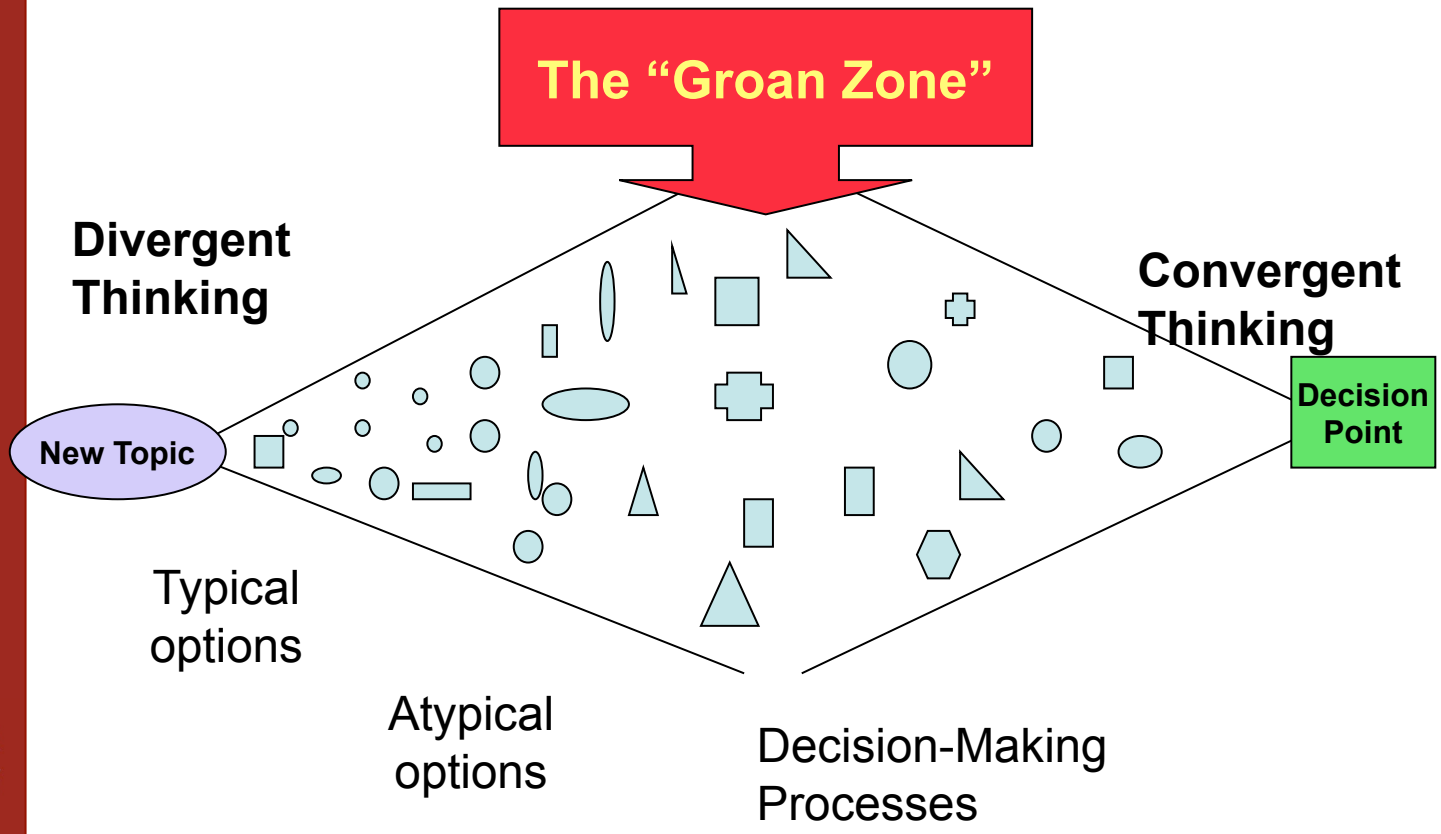
Typical Group Decision-Making Dynamics



Adapted from: Kaner, S. *Facilitator's guide to participatory decision-making* (1996)

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Decide How to Decide

Use Appropriate Decision Making Processes:

- Absolute Consensus
- Modified Consensus
- Consultative
- Consultative Consensus
- Voting

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"Fist to Five" (p. 21)

- Fist – no way, I'll block it
- One finger – I don't agree, but I won't block
- Two fingers – I don't agree, but I'll work for it
- Three fingers – I'm neutral
- Four fingers – It's a good idea, I'll work for it
- Five Fingers – It's a great idea, I'll lead

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Set Up Information and Communication Systems

Structured Systems:

- Meeting Agenda
- Recorder or scribe
- Meeting Minutes
- Accessible Documentation

Communication Approaches:

- Internal / External
- Formal / Informal

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Trap 5 – Getting Stuck in Conflict

Solutions:

- ✓ Recognize the Shapes of Conflict and Take Action
- ✓ Communicate to Diffuse Conflict
- ✓ Tackle Problem Meeting Behaviors

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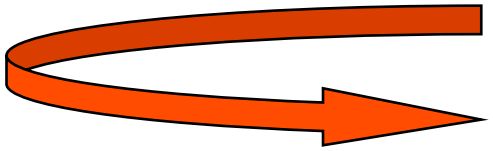
Recognize the Shapes of Conflict and Take Action

Shapes of Conflict:

- Direct Conflict
- Spiral Conflict
- Subtle Conflict
- Violent Conflict

Determine a Course of Action:



- Flight
- Fight
- Engagement

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Communicate to Diffuse Conflict

- Help the upset person tell his/her story and feel listened to
- Use active listening techniques
- Use neutral language
- Use affirming statements

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Activity: Conflict Exercise

- On a note card write a conflict you have experienced or are currently experiencing in a committee.
- Share in small groups
- As a group, review the communication strategies and identify 2-3 which you feel may have helped to diffuse the conflict?

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Tackle Problem Meeting Behaviors

If personalities in your committee disrupt tasks being accomplished or strain relationships, those behaviors must be addressed.

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Activity: Meeting Behaviors

Find individuals with the same problem behavior and discuss the following:

1) What are the consequences of doing nothing?

2) What strategies would you use for dealing with the difficult behavior?

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General Guidelines

When Dealing with Difficult Behaviors

- When possible, talk to them privately
- Focus on a specific behavior
- Don't judge
- Legitimize their feelings or perceptions
- Work with their issues when it will be productive for the group
- **Be sure to have ground rules**

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Trap 6 – Borin Usual

Solutions:

- ✓ Understand Behaviors that Help and Hinder Creativity
- ✓ Create Opportunities for Generating New Ideas
- ✓ Find Alternatives to Giving Reports

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Understand Behaviors that Help and Hinder Creativity

Some habits and behavior encourage the production of ideas while others stop idea generation completely.

Does your typical behavior "hinder" or "help" the creativity of your committee?

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Create Opportunities for Generating New Ideas

- Plan Time on the Agenda
- Schedule a Planning Retreat
- Utilize the "Parking Lot"
- Use Strategies for Generating New Ideas

Let's practice!

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Activity: Snow Card

What ideas do you have to make your meetings more interesting?

1. Put one idea per sticky note
   (use 3-7 words and write BIG)
2. Take turns posting one idea at a time, clustering similar ideas
3. Clarify and name categories
4. As a group, decide which ideas to pursue (vote with dots)

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Top 10 Reasons Not to Spend Time Giving Reports

6. People usually don't listen anyway.
7. It sometimes promotes inaccurate information.
8. Most people won't remember the information.
9. It may seem egocentric – (i.e. I did all these great things)
10. It's boring!

Justice, T. and Jamieson, D. (1998). The Complete Guide to Facilitation: Enabling Groups to Succeed, HRD Press, Inc. MA: Amherst

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Top 10 Reasons *continued…*

1. It seldom results in constructive action.
2. Only a few people need to know it – not everybody.
3. Usually there's nothing new.
4. There are more effective ways of giving data in less time.
5. People resent it.

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Justice, T. and Jamieson, D. (1998). The Complete Guide to Facilitation: Enabling Groups to Succeed, HRD Press, Inc. MA: Amherst

Find Alternatives to Giving Reports

Research shows that the retention rate of information that is reported at meetings is only 20%.

Suggestions:

- Send Info Out in Advance
- Designate 5% of Meeting Time for Reports
- Check In with Members
- Compress Reports

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Trap 7 – Losing Control of the Group

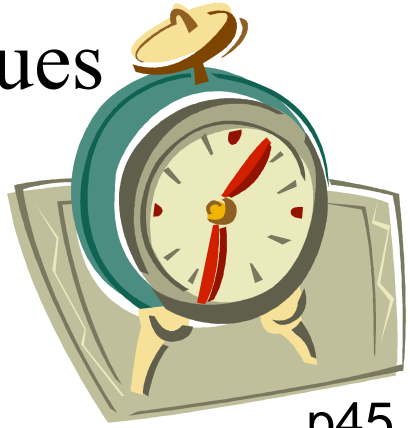
Solutions:

✓ Use Appropriate Leadership Style

✓ Design an Effective Meeting

✓ Get the Group Back on Track

✓ Use Facilitation Techniques



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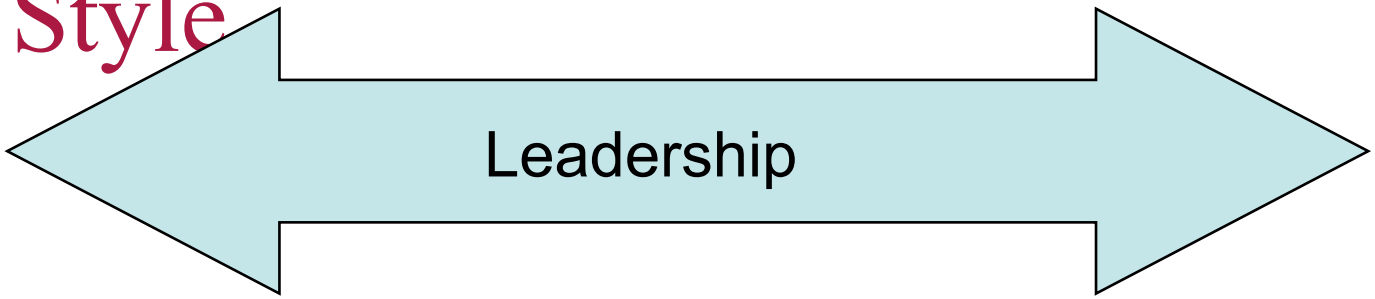
Use Appropriate Leadership Style



Autocratic Shared Laissez-Faire

Encourage shared leadership by:

- Structuring meetings so that everyone is engaged
- Summarizing decisions made, the action to be taken, and by whom
- Matching skills and interests of members to the work

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Design an Effective Meeting

Be thoughtful in your planning prior to the meeting. Give special attention to:

- **Meeting Arrangements**
- **Developing the Agenda**
- **Making Changes**

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Meeting Agendas…

- Define results
- List content
- Use time limits
- Match content and agenda order to importance
- Suggest processes for each topic
- Do a sanity check
- Create closure

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Activity: Evaluating Agendas

Instructions:

- In your groups, review the four agendas and discuss strengths and weaknesses of each
- Place them in order of strongest to weakest
- Be prepared to present your reasons

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Get the Group Back on Track

1. Don't Overload the Agenda
2. Get Permission to Interrupt
3. Refocus on the Issues
4. Set Time Limits
5. Explain the Benefits of Process Changes *Example: limit time for comments*

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Use Facilitation Techniques

Practice using techniques that will encourage discussion when the group interest wanes or when an issue becomes controversial.

Ex: Paraphrasing
Probing
Redirecting to the group
Moment of silence

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Activity: Bringing It All Together!

The Budget Cutting Meeting

1. Read through the case study
2. In your small group, identify applications of best practices in committee work

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One Final Recommendation!

Be intentional about taking time out to reflect and evaluate the health of your committee. *Some examples:*

- Activity K *(page 52)* **Feedback on How Meetings are Going**
- **Check In** with Members *(page 43)*
- Activity H *(page 35)* **Conflict Management Survey**

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Thank You

Any questions or comments?

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